



NMFS Announces Rescheduled Public Hearings for Draft Amendment 7 (Bluefin Tuna Management Measures)

On August 21, 2013, NMFS published a proposed rule (78 FR 52032) for Draft Amendment 7 to the 2006 Consolidated Atlantic HMS FMP to reduce bluefin tuna dead discards in the pelagic longline fishery via gear restricted areas and an individual bycatch cap, enhance reporting in all categories, reallocate U.S. bluefin tuna quota among all domestic categories, and ensure U.S. compliance with the ICCAT-recommended bluefin tuna quota and albacore tuna total allowable catch.

On August 22, 2013, NMFS published a notice of public hearings for Draft Amendment 7 to the 2006 Consolidated Highly Migratory Species (HMS) Fishery Management Plan (2006 Consolidated HMS FMP), which provided dates and locations for ten scheduled public hearings. Seven public hearings have been held to date: San Antonio, TX; Gloucester, MA; Manteo, NC; Charleston, SC; Belle Chasse, LA; Portland, ME; and Panama City, FL. NMFS also conducted consultations with the New England Fishery Management Council, the Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council, and the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council.

The public hearings that were scheduled in Fort Pierce, FL; St. Petersburg, FL; and Toms River, NJ; for October 1, 2, and 8, respectively, were cancelled due to the Federal Government shut-down from October 1 through 16, 2013. Therefore, the public hearings in Fort Pierce, FL; St. Petersburg, FL; and Toms River, NJ have been rescheduled.

Table 1. Dates, times, and locations of upcoming public hearings.

Venue	Date/Time	Meeting Locations	Location Contact Information
Public Hearing	November 12, 2013 6 p.m. – 10 p.m.	Fort Pierce, FL	Days Inn Fort Pierce 3224 U.S. 1 Fort Pierce, FL 34982 (772) 465-7000
Public Hearing	November 13, 2013 6 p.m. – 10 p.m.	St. Petersburg, FL	National Marine Fisheries Service, Southeast Regional Office 263 13th Avenue South Saint Petersburg, Florida 33701 (727) 824-5301
Public Hearing	December 3, 2013 6 p.m. – 10 p.m.	Toms River, NJ	Ocean County Public Administration Building Freeholders Meeting Room (119) 101 Hooper Ave Toms River, NJ 08754 (732) 929-2147

The comment period for Draft Amendment 7 ends on December 10, 2013. Written public comments can be submitted electronically or by mail. Submit all electronic public comments via the Federal e-Rulemaking Portal: <http://www.regulations.gov>. To submit comments via the e-Rulemaking Portal, first click the “submit a comment” icon, then enter NOAA-NMFS-2013-0101 in the keyword search. Locate the document you wish to comment on from the resulting list and click on the “Submit a Comment” icon on the right of that line.

Submit written comments to Thomas Warren, National Marine Fisheries Service, 55 Great Republic Drive, F/SF1, Suite 02-200, Gloucester, MA 01930. Please mark the outside of the envelope “Comments on the Draft Amendment 7 to the 2006 Consolidated HMS FMP.”

The public is reminded that NMFS expects participants at public hearings, council meetings, and phone conferences to conduct themselves appropriately. At the beginning of each meeting, a representative of NMFS will explain the ground rules (e.g., alcohol is prohibited from the meeting room; attendees will be called to give their comments in the order in which they registered to speak; each attendee will have an equal amount of time to speak; attendees may not interrupt one another; etc.). NMFS representatives will structure the meeting so that all attending members of the public will be able to comment, if they choose, regardless of the controversial nature of the subject(s). Attendees are expected to respect the ground rules, and those that do not will be asked to leave the meeting.

This notice is a courtesy to HMS fishery participants to help keep you informed about the fishery. For further information, contact Thomas Warren or Brad McHale at 978-281-9260, or Jennifer Cudney or Craig Cockrell at 301-427-8503. This information will also be posted on the HMS website at: <http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/sfa/hms>.

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